

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY LIMA

DEA HQS WASHC

DEA AIR WING ADDISON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR

SUBJECT: AIR SUPPORT FOR OPERATION FUNNEL

REF: DEA 02326

1. REFTEL REQUESTED ADDRESSEE COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON AIR SUPPORT FOR OPERATION FUNNEL. STATE AND AID COMMENTS FOLLOW.

2. WE UNDERSTAND AIR SUPPORT HAS THREE BASIC MISSIONS: (1) LOGISTICAL SUPPORT FOR FIELD UNITS; (2) COMMAND AND CONTROL, I.E., MOVING COMMAND PERSONNEL TO FIELD LOCATIONS WHEN SITUATION REQUIRES THEIR PRESENCE; AND (3) SURVEILLANCE AND RECONNAISSANCE.

3. WE CONCUR THAT AIR SUPPORT WOULD BE HELPFUL IN VIEW OF LIMITED ROAD TRANSPORT FACILITIES, BUT WE BELIEVE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED BEFORE AIR SUPPORT
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COMMITTED:

(A) IF A MAJOR GOAL OF FUNNEL IS TO TEACH HOST GOVERNMENT FORCES HOW TO INTERDICT COCA PASTE AND COCAINE, SHOULD WE NOT USE TECHNIQUES THAT WE CAN REASONABLY EXPECT THEM TO CONTINUE EVEN AFTER FUNNEL IS OVER? SPECIFICALLY, IS IT

REASONABLE TO EXPECT THAT GOP FORCES WOULD PROVIDE AIR SUPPORT TO A SIMILAR ALL-PERUVIAN OPERATION?

(B) RE LOGISTICAL SUPPORT MISSION, HAS IT BEEN DETERMINED -- AND IF SO, ON WHAT BASIS -- THAT COMMERCIAL AIR TRANSPORT IS INSUFFICIENT TO SUPPORT OPERATION? WE UNDERSTAND THAT LOCAL AIRLINES SERVE PUCALLPA, IQUITOS AND OTHER MAJOR AIRPORTS; DO THOSE AIRPORTS NOT SERVED BY LOCAL AIRLINES HAVE FUEL AND RUNWAYS OF SUFFICIENT LENGTH TO ACCEPT AN AIRCRAFT LARGE ENOUGH TO PROVIDE MEANINGFUL LOGISTICAL SUPPORT?

(C) RE SURVEILLANCE AND RECONNAISSANCE MISSION, WE WONDER IF GROUND COVER -- PARTICULARLY IN AMAZON BASIN -- IS SPARSE ENOUGH TO PERMIT MEANINGFUL AERIAL OBSERVATION OF TRAFFICKERS MOVING BY SURFACE VEHICLES.

4. ASSUMING A HARD LOOK AT THE NEED FOR AIR SUPPORT DEMONSTRATES IT IS IN FACT NECESSARY (AND WE HAVE YET TO SEE THIS DEMONSTRATED), WE BELIEVE THERE ARE ADDITIONAL OPTIONS NOT PROPOSED IN PARA THREE OF REFTEL. BEFORE RUSHING TO PURCHASE AIRCRAFT -- THEREBY INCURRING NOT ONLY PURCHASE PRICE BUT FERRY COSTS DOWN AND BACK -- WE BELIEVE EXHAUSTIVE EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO LOCATE SUITABLE CHARTER AIRCRAFT IN PERU OR, EVEN BETTER, TO OBTAIN PERUVIAN AIR FORCE SUPPORT WITH SOME KIND OF COST-SHARING IF NECESSARY. CHARTER OR AIR FORCE COOPERATION WOULD PERMIT USE OF DIFFERENT AIRCRAFT FOR DIFFERENT MISSIONS (INCLUDING POSSIBLE USE OF SEAPLANE IN RIVERS AREA WHEN NECESSARY) RATHER THAN LOOKING FOR ONE AIRCRAFT TYPE AS COMPROMISE SOLUTION.

5. WE SUGGEST THAT LIMA, IN PREPARING ITS COMMENTS ON REFTEL, ADDRESS QUESTIONS IN PARA THREE ABOVE AND, IF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONVINCED THAT AIR SUPPORT TRULY ESSENTIAL, EXAMINE POSSIBILITY OF CHARTER AVAILABILITY AND/OR PERUVIAN AIR FORCE SUPPORT. SISCO

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